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Congress of the United States
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March 31, 2011

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY

Honorable Dan Elliot
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Suite 1220
Washington, DC 20423-0001

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Dear Chairman Elliot:

I am writing in response to Docket No. E.P. 705 and wish to express my strong support for a healthy, robust freight railroad network, not only in the Commonwealth of Virginia but across the entire Atlantic seaboard.

Freight railroads are an important industry for Virginia. The Commonwealth is served by 10 rail operators, including CSX and Norfolk Southern, which has its headquarters in the city of Norfolk. These railroads alone employ more than 5,500 Virginians and account for more than \$360 million in annual payroll.

The industries that freight railroads serve in Virginia depend on them for safe and efficient transportation. From our ports to our homes, freight rail is a core asset to the supply chain of goods to customers.

North America's freight railroads have announced plans to invest more than \$12 billion in 2011 to enhance and maintain their infrastructure. As you know, each \$1 billion spent on rail infrastructure supports 20,000 jobs. Under the present regulatory environment, U.S. freight railroads are creating jobs and improving their infrastructure in Virginia and throughout the nation. The positive impact of these investments to job creation cannot be overlooked in the current economic climate.

With Virginia and so many other states seeking to expand the economy and create jobs, any action by the Surface Transportation Board to adopt policies that would discourage private investment should be avoided.

I ask that you carefully consider the impact our railroads have on our national economy as you review the regulation policies at your hearing in June, 2011.

Sincerely,



Scott Rigell
Member of Congress